

*Appln no. 09/844,965*

*Amendment After Final dated March 9, 2005*

*Reply to final Office Action of Dec. 21, 2004*

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station adapted and configured to house the object ~~without immersing the object~~;  
sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and spray around and against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or to circulate and spray a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and  
dryer adapted and configured to dry the object.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the sonicator is adapted and configured to provide ultrasonic energy from a point at the first station.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2, further comprising holder at the first station, the holder being adapted and configured for supporting the object, and  
wherein the sonicator comprises ultrasonic probe at the first station and adjacent position taken by the object in the holder.

4. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the sonicator comprises irrigated probe.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the sonicator is adapted and configured to provide ultrasonic energy throughout fluid at the first station.

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6. (Original) The system of claim 5, further comprising second sonicator adapted and configured to provide ultrasonic energy from probe outside the first station.
7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the second sonicator comprises irrigated probe.
8. (Original) The system of claim 6, further comprising holder adapted and configured to support the object adjacent the second sonicator probe.
9. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the sonicator is adapted and configured to dislodge soil from the object and the liquid transporter is adapted and configured to remove the soil.
10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid transporter comprises pump and valve adapted and configured to circulate fluid at the first station and around and against the object, to add fluid to the first station, and to remove fluid from the first station.
11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the first station, the sonicator, and the liquid transporter are adapted and configured to apply to the object the wash composition and ultrasonic energy.
12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the sonicator is adapted and configured to provide ultrasonic energy from point within the first station.
13. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the sonicator comprises irrigated probe.
14. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the sonicator applies ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition.

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15-17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid transporter comprises sprayer adapted and configured to apply to the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the first station comprises spray chamber.

20. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid transporter is adapted and configured to sequentially circulate the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, and the rinse composition.

21. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid transporter is adapted and configured to circulate the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, first rinse composition, second rinse composition, or to circulate a plurality of these compositions.

22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the liquid transporter is adapted and configured to sequentially circulate, in this order, the wash composition, the first rinse composition, the antimicrobial composition, and the second rinse composition.

23. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising dispenser adapted and configured to add wash concentrate, antimicrobial concentrate, rinse concentrate, or to add a plurality of these concentrates.

24. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the dryer is adapted and configured to dry the object at the first station.

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25. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the dryer comprises blower adapted and configured to circulate heated gas at the first station.

26. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising injector adapted and configured to add sterilant at the first station.

27. (Original) The system of claim 26, wherein the injector comprises pressure release valve adapted and configured to release at the first station gaseous sterilant from pressurized vessel.

28. (Original) The system of claim 26, further comprising vent adapted and configured to evacuate sterilant gas from the first station.

29. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising conveyor adapted and configured to transport the object through the system.

30. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising emitter adapted and configured to impact the object with microwave or light energy.

31. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, further comprising second station, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and spray around and against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate at the second station and spray around and against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; the second station comprises the dryer; or a combination thereof.

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32. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein the liquid transport system comprises sprayer at the second station and adapted and configured to apply to the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein the second station comprises spray chamber.

34-35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently amended) The system of claim 31, wherein the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the rinse composition.

37. (Currently amended) The system of claim 36, wherein the first station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, and first rinse composition; and the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

38. (Currently amended) The system of claim 31, wherein the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition and the rinse composition.

39. (Currently amended) The system of claim 38, wherein the first station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition and first rinse composition; and the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition and second rinse composition.

40. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein the second station comprises the dryer.

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41. (Original) The system of claim 31, further comprising injector adapted and configured to add sterilant at the second station.

42. (Currently amended) The system of claim 31, further comprising third station, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and spray around and against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate at the second station and spray around and against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate at the third station and spray around and against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; the third station comprises the dryer; or a combination thereof.

43. (Original) The system of claim 42, wherein the third station comprises the dryer.

44. (Original) The system of claim 43, further comprising injector adapted and configured to add sterilant at the third station.

45. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the rinse composition.

46. (Original) The system of claim 45, wherein the liquid transport system comprises sprayer at the third station and adapted and configured to apply the rinse composition to the object.

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47. (Original) The system of claim 46, wherein the third station comprises spray chamber.

48-49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition, first rinse composition and the antimicrobial composition; and

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

51. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition and first rinse composition; and  
the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition and second rinse composition.

52. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition; and  
the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object first rinse composition, the antimicrobial composition, and second rinse composition.

53. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition and first rinse composition;  
the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition; and

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the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

54. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object first rinse composition and the antimicrobial composition; and

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

55. (Currently amended) The system of claim 42, further comprising fourth station, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, or a plurality of these compositions;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions;

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions; and

the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions; the fourth station comprises the dryer; or a combination thereof.

56. (Original) The system of claim 55, wherein the fourth station comprises the dryer.



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57. (Original) The system of claim 56, further comprising injector adapted and configured to add sterilant at the fourth station.

58. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, wherein the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the rinse composition.

59. (Original) The system of claim 58, wherein the liquid transport system comprises sprayer in the fourth station and adapted and configured to apply the rinse composition to the object.

60. (Original) The system of claim 59, wherein the fourth station comprises spray chamber.

61-62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition and first rinse composition; and

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

64. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition and first rinse composition;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition;

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition.

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65. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object first rinse composition; and

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition and second rinse composition.

66. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the wash composition;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object first rinse composition;

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition; and

the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object second rinse composition and the fourth station comprises the dryer.

67. (Currently amended) The system of claim 55, further comprising fifth station, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

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the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object;~~

the fifth station is adapted and configured to circulate at the fifth station and around and spray against the object the rinse composition, the fifth station comprises the dryer, or a combination thereof.

68. (Original) The system of claim 67, wherein the fifth station comprises the dryer.

69. (Original) The system of claim 68, further comprising injector adapted and configured to add sterilant at the fifth station.

70. (Currently amended) The system of claim 67, wherein the fifth station is adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object the rinse composition.

71. (Original) The system of claim 70, wherein the liquid transport system comprises sprayer in the fifth station and adapted and configured to apply the rinse composition to the object.

72. (Original) The system of claim 71, wherein the fifth station comprises spray chamber.

73-74. (Canceled)

75. (Original) The system of claim 67, wherein:  
the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate the wash composition;  
the second station is adapted and configured to circulate first rinse composition;  
the third station is adapted and configured to circulate the antimicrobial composition; and

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the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate second rinse composition.

76. (Currently amended) The system of claim 67, further comprising sixth station, wherein:

the first station comprises the sonicator and is adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object the wash composition, the antimicrobial composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the second station is adapted and configured to circulate at the second station and around and against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the third station is adapted and configured to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the fourth station is adapted and configured to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

the fifth station is adapted and configured to circulate at the fifth station and around and spray against the object the rinse composition, the fifth station comprises the dryer, the fifth station comprises the apparatus to add gaseous sterilant, or a combination thereof; and

the sixth station comprises the dryer, the sixth station comprises the apparatus to add gaseous sterilant, or a combination thereof.

77. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, and rinse composition ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the presence of sterilant.

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78. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing object, the system comprising:

first station and second station;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the second station in the presence of sterilant.

79. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station, second station, and third station;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the third station in the presence of sterilant.

80. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station, second station, third station, and fourth station;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

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liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the fourth station in the presence of sterilant.

81. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station, second station, third station, fourth station, and fifth station;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object at the fifth station in the presence of sterilant.

82. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station, second station, third station, fourth station, fifth station, and sixth station;

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sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object at the fifth station; and

apparatus adapted and configured to add to the sixth station gaseous sterilant.

83. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

first station, second station, third station, fourth station, fifth station, and sixth station;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the second station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; to circulate at the third station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and to circulate at the fourth station and around and spray against the object the antimicrobial composition, the rinse composition, or a plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~;

apparatus adapted and configured to add to the fifth station gaseous sterilant; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object at the sixth station.

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84. (Currently amended) A system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the system comprising:

emitter adapted and configured to impact the object with energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, and rinse composition ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the presence of sterilant.

85. (Original) The system of claim 84, wherein the emitter comprises source of ultraviolet light adapted and configured to impact the object with ultraviolet light.

86. (Original) The system of claim 84, wherein the emitter comprises source of microwave energy adapted and configured to impact the object with microwave energy.

87. (Original) The system of claim 84, wherein the emitter and the liquid transporter are adapted and configured to impact the object with energy during or after circulating antimicrobial agent.

88. (Original) The system of claim 84, wherein the emitter and the dryer are adapted and configured to impact the object with energy before, during, or after operation of the dryer.

89. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

contacting the object with wash composition and ultrasonic energy ~~without immersing the object in the wash composition~~;

treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying ~~without immersing the object in the antimicrobial composition~~;



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rinsing the object with rinse composition ~~by spraying without immersing the object in the~~  
~~rinse composition;~~

drying the object; and

exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

90. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein the wash composition comprises antimicrobial agent.

91. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein the wash composition comprises solid carbonate cleaning composition.

92. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein contacting the object with ultrasonic energy comprises providing ultrasonic energy from point source adjacent the object.

93. (Original) The method of claim 92, wherein contacting the object with ultrasonic energy comprises providing ultrasonic energy from irrigated probe adjacent the object.

94. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein contacting the object with ultrasonic energy comprises applying ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition.

95. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein contacting the object with ultrasonic energy comprises providing ultrasonic energy from point source adjacent the object before contacting the object with the wash composition and applying ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition.

96. (Original) The method of claim 95, wherein providing ultrasonic energy from point source adjacent the object comprises providing ultrasonic energy from irrigated probe adjacent the object.

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97. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein treating comprises treating with antimicrobial composition comprising peroxycarboxylic acid.

98. (Original) The method of claim 97, wherein the peroxycarboxylic acid comprises peroxyacetic acid, peroxyoctanoic acid, peroxyheptanoic acid, peroxynonanoic acid, or a combination thereof.

99. (Canceled)

100. (Original) The method of claim 97, wherein treating comprises treating the object for sufficient time to achieve sterilization.

101. (Canceled)

102. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein treating comprises impacting the object with microwave or light energy.

103. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein the rinse composition comprises an alcohol drying agent, lubricant, rinse agent, or a combination thereof.

104. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein rinsing comprises first rinsing after contacting and before treating, second rinsing after treating and before drying, or a combination thereof.

105. (Canceled)

106. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein drying comprises circulating heated gas around the object.

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107. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein drying comprises exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

108. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein the gaseous sterilant comprises chlorine dioxide, ethylene oxide, or a combination thereof.

109. (Original) The method of claim 108, wherein drying comprises releasing the gaseous sterilant through pressure release valve from pressurized vessel.

110. (Original) The method of claim 108, wherein drying further comprises evacuating the gaseous sterilant from around the object.

111. (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein drying comprises impacting the object with microwave or light energy.

112. (Original) The method of claim 89, further comprising translocating the object between contacting and treating, between treating and rinsing, between rinsing and drying, or a combination thereof.

113. (Currently amended) The method of claim 89, comprising carrying out contacting, treating, rinsing, and drying in system comprising:

first station adapted and configured to house the object;

sonicator adapted and configured to impact the object in the first station with ultrasonic energy;

liquid transporter adapted and configured to circulate at the first station and around and spray against the object wash composition, antimicrobial composition, rinse composition, or to circulate plurality of these compositions ~~without immersing the object~~; and

dryer adapted and configured to dry the object in the presence of sterilant.

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114. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

contacting the object with wash composition and ultrasonic energy and providing the ultrasonic energy from point source adjacent the object ~~without immersing the object in the wash composition;~~

treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying ~~without immersing the object in the antimicrobial composition;~~

rinsing the object with rinse composition by spraying ~~without immersing the object in the rinse composition;~~

drying the object; and

exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

115. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

contacting the object with wash composition and ultrasonic energy ~~without immersing the object in the wash composition;~~

applying ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition;

treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying ~~without immersing the object in the antimicrobial composition;~~

rinsing the object with rinse composition by spraying ~~without immersing the object in the rinse composition;~~

drying the object; and

exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

116. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

applying ultrasonic energy to the object from point source adjacent the object;

contacting the object with wash composition and ultrasonic energy ~~without immersing the object in the wash composition;~~

applying ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition;

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treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying without immersing the object in the antimicrobial composition;

rinsing the object with rinse composition by spraying without immersing the object in the rinse composition;

drying the object; and

exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

117. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

applying ultrasonic energy to the object from point source adjacent the object;

contacting the object with wash composition and ultrasonic energy without immersing the object in the wash composition;

applying ultrasonic energy throughout the wash composition;

rinsing the object with first rinse composition by spraying without immersing the object in the first rinse composition;

treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying without immersing the object in the first rinse composition;

rinsing the object with second rinse composition by spraying without immersing the object in the second rinse composition;

drying the object; and

exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.

118. (Currently amended) A method for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing an object, the method comprising:

contacting the object with wash composition and emitted energy without immersing the object in the wash composition;

treating the object with antimicrobial composition by spraying without immersing the object in the antimicrobial composition;

rinsing the object with rinse composition by spraying without immersing the object in the rinse composition;

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drying the object; and  
exposing the object to gaseous sterilant.